Dear Howard, 2/22/76

This is a secondObest letter. I've about 15 minutes before supper, nothing short to read, too little time to do any writing and besides it has been a busted-up day. Jim was here for 4½ to get what she needs to prepare his taxes. At the beginning I had other things to do and then the phone started. First a friend I was glad to talk to and then Playboy, which is struggling with the second of two very bad pieces - a lot worse than they would have been but still very bad stuff. This is Sunday. They were to have gone to press Friday and they still have troubles, mostly from hard heads.

Crazy stuff in every way. Formless, irresponsible, puposeless and inaccurate.

It has been nothing to spend 2-3 hours at a time on the phone and how many times I can't count.

The whole thing has degenerated to where they have made some corrections with profuse expressions of gratitude, as with insanities about Carlos Marcello, no less, and blindly insist on the irrelevant that is hardly less bad. The telling argument had nothing to do with fact. Rather all I did was ask if they realized what he could do with their circulation on his extensive turf. But this worked for half. The other half, based on nothing, as of this late afternoon, was still in. I feel so sorry for the sweet young woman who is the researcher on the job. She is the sould of conscientiousness and faces stone walls.

One device intended for other purposes worked as I did not expect. The author has been a friend. After the first peice I begged him to carbon me on hos ~~xxxxxx~~ roughs so I could save his face. And I asked no extra pay for it. He said he would and I've not heard from him since. So, once they were past the point where they could change the first six (of 70!) pages of the second piece I suggested to the research director, knowing there would be ego involvements, that he have this researcher, when she called again, be ready to tape so the author could hear what I say. He was due there. Instead, whether or not he did, the articles editor listened and was thoroughly impressed with the meticulousness and precision of the comment, ciriticism and correction. What a world, what journalism has become, if simple, competent honest work gets raves! What the hell else are they supposed to be paying me for.

Aside from content he was also impressed by the number of times I noted for them what served no purpose and could be hurtful to them. Again, what the hell else did they hire me for and what are my obligations to them other than this? Carazy!

But it has been a great drag, an enormous waster of time. Had I ~~kx~~ not made the promise last year, when something quite different was laid out to me, and were it not that at any time, while I may hope not, I may face medical bills, I might have chucked it. The time it has taken from writing is enormous and the costs of the interruptions alone are great. They destroy concentration, trains of thought and peace of mind. However, I've made good progress despite it and other problems. I'm nearing the end of the second of three parts of the new King book. It keeps growing as I write but I think it will not be too big and is structred so it can be cut easily.

Having no typist and not knowing whether I'll be hospitalized again I've decided to push with the writing, leaving places to be returned to when I can't do that writing as I got. It is, essentially, off the top of the head.

But tomorrow will be another Playboy day. It begins with leaving for regular blood testing so I guess until they are finished I'll not be able to write. I'll have to leave Thursday not to make Friday too long a day. Early plane for Detroit for a convocation speech at a black college. Floyd is going with me. If Jim can lean hard enough maybe I'll have to get an early start Thursday to go over what DJ is supposed to have finished searching for last week in an FOIA case-an estimate week of professional time in searching.

Jim and I had much to discuss the phone prevented and then he had to leave because he marveollosu baby was getting fretful. Maybe we'll do it Thursday if the DJ has nix.

Otherwise things are about as they have been. I attribute your long silence to your long hours as the term's end nears. However, when you have time, please let me know about the request I asked you to make for a friend. Best to Duane, Sincerely,